

Robert Carley, Stefanie A Jones, Eero Laine, Chris Alen Sula, "Editors' Introduction: Opening Access," *Lateral* 8.1 (2019).

<https://doi.org/10.25158/L8.1.1>

This content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright is retained by authors.

Issue 8.1 (Spring 2019)

Editors' Introduction: Opening Access

Robert Carley, Stefanie A Jones, Eero Laine and Chris Alen Sula

ABSTRACT This introduction discusses the importance of open access scholarship and its relation to the academy. The introduction provides an overview of the articles in the journal, which include responses to the forum on universal basic income (UBI) published in issue 7.2. Finally, this issue marks the beginning of the Years in Cultural Studies project.

There is something underwhelming about the idea of 2019. Now ten years away from some of the lowest points of the last financial crisis, it's hard to see precisely where the crisis ever abated.¹ The past ten years seem to have taught two very different lessons of austerity—how to survive it or endure it, as the case may be for most, and how to leverage it for further political gains and profit, for those in positions to do so.

As we know, the university is not immune to the bad-faith logic of austerity markets, and the case of Stanford University Press provides a contemporary example. Stanford recently announced its decision to withdraw funding for the press, citing budget cuts due to lower return on its endowment. The amount that Stanford provides is less than half of the press' annual revenue, and the University no doubt continues to subsidize other programs that are expected to generate revenue, particularly, alongside alumni donations, in the case of athletics. As Cathy Davidson writes, "To declare 'austerity' now and blame a smaller than expected return on the University's endowment (the third largest in the country) as the rationale for cutting subsidy to a distinguished scholarly press is ludicrous and hypocritical. And *selective*."² After an outcry from the scholarly community, Stanford announced its decision to fund the press next year using "one-time funds."³ The logic of austerity remains in place, as does its resultant demand that the press be self-sustaining in the near future. As austerity measures are applied to the otherwise exceedingly well funded, it should be clear that austerity now is not really about budgets, dollars, and cents, and that it is rather an ideological position with which to exert forceful control over communities that do not conform to increasingly impossible notions of profitability.

While university presses are indeed worthy of support—as worthy, if not more worthy than other initiatives—it should also be noted that many of them mirror commercial publishers who are in part responsible for the very financial stress that leads universities to invoke austerity measures in the first place. University libraries spend millions each year to maintain subscriptions to paywalled articles that have been written by faculty through the support of university resources and in some cases through taxpayer funds (though increasingly less so as states cut funding to higher education). At the hands of commercial publishers, much research remains inaccessible to others, sometimes even to colleagues and students at their own universities, and to many institutions considered periphery to US/EU markets that cannot afford these subscriptions in the first place. Notably, the University of California system recently cancelled its subscription to Elsevier, a major academic publisher, following hundreds of institutions in Germany and Sweden

over concerns about access to scholarship. It is still to be seen what impact this might have on the vast system of commercial academic publishing, or what alternatives might emerge.

While presses decry budget cuts and respond with increasing considerations for how to turn a profit, open access provides an alternative. This alternative is actually vital in a period when online content policing is both a daily business practice⁴ and a matter of state policy?⁵ While Tumblr and Twitter users may rage about how recently increased restrictions disproportionately target the left,⁶ changes in the social media landscape are, from the perspective of capitalists, just business as usual. And that in and of itself is extremely telling, for the digital is, in many ways, still just business as usual. Sites, apps, and forms in which the left has invested, locations that have felt like community building and organizing, or like the practice of a radically new sociality, or like new outlets for the expression of oppositional cultures, have always been at the service of or subject to the control of capital. It is not surprising that they are now being more explicitly and deliberately directed towards corporate and statist ends.

A key recent example of how easily online leftist organizing can be destroyed is the FBI shutdown of Backpage, which came alongside the passing of SESTA and FOSTA. As Backpage was a site for commerce (and, as is also the case for many other online resources used for leftist organizing, there is no evidence that its CEO and site founders intended it for anything other than profit), it might at first seem to be an odd example of an anti-capitalist online space. Nonetheless, it was turned towards those ends by its users (intentionally or not), utilized as a site of worker control and autonomy from within the capitalist patriarchy's regime of wage and reproductive labor. Indeed, sex work operates as an epitomical site of capitalism, with laborers in this industry alongside temp workers (i.e. in the farming and shipping industries), and independent contractors (i.e. domestic workers) at the frontlines of capitalism's brutal exigencies. With the closure of Backpage, and elevated criminalization of consensual sex work through the accompanying laws, sex workers have faced increased labor demands,⁷ physical violence, exploitation,⁸ and poverty simultaneously.⁹ While this leftist online resource was shuttered in the name of preventing sex trafficking (and it is obligatory to note that these laws do not actually stop the sex trafficking for which they are named), it is part of a long process of policing of sex and sexuality in the United States as part of the good Protestant asceticism that might be seen as the ideological underpinning of austerity budgeting.¹⁰ The destruction of this site is one of the many ways in which a logic of restriction and asceticism is used to punish the most vulnerable, to make sure we knuckle under to the level of exploitation that capitalism would prefer to take from us. As a principle and a practice in opposition to such restriction, the value of open access as an ethos and a principle is clear.

Additionally, when we advocate for open access (for this journal and beyond), it has to be as part of a project against privatization on the broadest terms, informed by the complexities of how capitalism is lived. This is to say that sex work must be important when thinking about the infrastructures of the academy because the arenas are entangled under the structures that shape and control contemporary life. Open access is thus essential not simply as a moral stance, but because of the class relations of the academy. While full-time faculty members may be able to "pay what knowledge is worth," and students who are fortunate enough to attend an academic institution that subscribes to digital resources may make it through paywalls, this neglects the actual class hierarchy of the university, which relies heavily on the labor of adjuncts. Austerity budgeting in the university has not worked as a temporary mechanism to make it through difficult times; it has restructured the university so that it now depends on a significant pool of underpaid and under-remunerated laborers. These are not "short term solutions;" they are part of

the regular budgeting and decision making process. Austerity is thus designed to produce adjunctification, where those temp laborers carry the exigencies of capitalism in their bodies.¹¹ Austerity does not reduce costs and insecurities, but displaces these costs and insecurities onto adjuncts.

The fact that the academy is intimately racializing and classing is well documented.¹² Yet it bears restating, in perhaps another way: historically low-income and working-class people (not to be confused with the employed middle-class, however hard they might work), people with disabilities, and people from marginalized groups including and especially Black and Indigenous people of color and trans/queer people, can least bear these costs. Adjunctification acts as a wall that keeps these groups from flourishing in the academy. Of course, there are numerous academics who have “made it:” the exceptions that prove the rule, particularly for those who have enough economic resources to both embody bourgeois social codes and take personal economic risks such as moving or risking a semester without pay. Privatized research resources, beyond their cost in and of themselves, are a continuation of this expression of austerity logic as well: the deliberate exclusion and delegitimation of adjuncts and independent scholars in a classed, raced, abled, and gendered manner.

As Toby Miller has indicated, one of the most important offerings of cultural studies which remains powerful today is its capacity to “galvanize opposition to exploitation.”¹³ In this spirit we argue that open access, then, should extend beyond simply making articles free and available on a journal’s website. It should also mean opening the academy: eliminating tuition, funding students for attending, converting all adjuncts to full time hires and eliminating adjunctification, support for students bridging institution to institution (undergraduate to graduate school, graduate school to employment), as well as deliberate programs to seek out, recruit, and retain students and faculty from communities historically underrepresented in the academy, especially those for whom the costs of the academy are too high to even consider entering.

This issue continues *Lateral’s* tradition of open-access publishing and critical engagement with culture through several articles, part two of the forum on Universal Basic Income, book reviews, and the introduction of a new section.

In “[Context and Organization: Situating Antonio Negri’s ‘Factory of Strategy’ in the Contemporary Debate on the Party Form](#),” Douglas Spielman addresses the organizational impasse confronting the contemporary left regarding how it might effectively intervene in the polity. The debate on the party form, which finds its roots in Lenin’s work, was taken up by Antonio Negri, in the 1970s. However, Negri’s most complete consideration of Lenin’s writing on the party has only recently been translated as *Factory of Strategy: 33 Lessons on Lenin*. Spielman’s offers a reading of Negri’s text with a specific focus on the concept of class composition as a way to pursue his main claim that the Leninist party is a historically specific form of political organization that requires a historicizing concept to understand the limits and opportunities offered through it. At the end of the paper Spielman works his reading of Negri into a critical interpretation of and comparison with Jodi Dean’s endorsement of the party form. Dean’s original conception of the party, which is also reliant on Lenin, is perhaps the most significant driver of contemporary North American debates on the party form. Dean’s rigorous and original position on and defense of the party however differs from Negri’s approach to organizational questions. Spielman’s contribution robustly navigates contemporary debates regarding the party form and his wide-ranging reading of both Negri and Dean provides a methodological basis for analyzing contemporary issues regarding contemporary organizational questions.

In "[The Rationalization of Leisure: Marxist Feminism and the Fantasy of Machine Subordination](#)," Lindsay Weinberg works through genealogies of domestic labor, tying both historical and critical literatures to contemporary mechanisms of rationalizing women's leisure. The article questions notions of women's work and leisure broadly, and importantly marks clear connections between online activity and household work as spaces that often elude analyses of the spaces of wage labor and the workforce. Extending arguments stretching back to *Wages for Housework*, Weinberg's explicitly Marxist feminist interventions open new space to understand and critique online activity and surveillance.

S. L. Nelson's "[Sex Work and Social Media: Policy, Identity, and Privacy in Networked Publics and Counterpublics](#)" investigates the operation of normative publics and counterpublics in digital networks. Nelson uses qualitative, queer social research methodology to further explore how sex workers navigate surveillance and privacy within and between these sites. Finding that their subjects take a variety of actions to manage their identities and protect their privacy online, Nelson suggests that this vulnerable population's ongoing performances of privacy act as one model for combatting today's wide-spread internet surveillance.

In "[When Shock is No Longer Shocking: The Role of Seduction in Revitalizing Benjamin's Dialectical Image Under Late-Capitalist Conditions](#)," A.K. Thompson offers a piercing analysis of the current conjuncture, particularly the rise of far-Right, Nazi, and nationalist movements around the world, and our collective incapacity to experience shock in the face of these developments. Thompson recalls Walter Benjamin's dialectical mode of materialist analysis and action centered on the image. Benjamin identified particular images that had the unmediated capacity to shock viewers into recognizing their historic responsibilities; responsibilities that could only be met by politics. However, Thompson argues that although Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image and the shock relation remains an essential departure point for understanding the role that culture plays in individual and collective political mobilization he asks how might we approach Benjamin's insights regarding the dialectical image when shock is no longer shocking? Thompson reads the work of Mark Lombardi and Cindy Sherman to show how seduction might work as a concrete strategy to revitalizing our capacity to experience shock under late-capitalist conditions. Through a synthesis of Lombardi and Sherman's work, Thompson argues for a new political art that would make it possible to grasp our individual and collective political subjectivity and—in the face of our collective inability to experience shock—to regain a capacity to act and struggle.

YJ Hwang looks at how the 1916 Easter Rising is transformed through the Irish tourism industry, especially through an associated walking tour, in "[Aestheticizing the City through Storytelling and Walking: Dublin's 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour](#)." Hwang pays particular attention to the performative way the tour guide and his walking tour entangle the audience in the recreation of historical memory: the tour guide's historical narrative, the tour's shaping of social and architectural encounters with Dublin, and the collective recreation a particular geography of the rebellion through the process of walking together. Connecting theoretical work on tourism to reviews of the tour and a first hand account of the tour, Hwang demonstrates how tourism aestheticizes the city of Dublin itself.

In "[Disruptions](#)" Dwaipayan Chowdhury talked with Jacques Rancière to discuss the constraints that the context of modernity imposed on the expressions of the autonomous potential of art and how and why this produced a persistent and recurrent effect on aesthetics, experience, and politics. In the interview, Chowdhury approaches Rancière's politics of aesthetics as a way to reimagine Schiller's concept of aesthetics as a departure












point into politics. The foundation for the idea of “disruptions” is predicated upon an aesthetic experience that suppresses the modernist foundations of aesthetic experience; experiences divorced from a common existence. Chowdhury explains that in Rancière’s rearticulation of Shiller’s aesthetics as “a state of being” as, instead, “a state of the free” re-centers or becomes a systemic basis for a theory of aesthetics that recasts the autonomy of the artwork and aesthetic experience not as divorced from life but, rather, as creative political means to destruct the modernist impulses governing aesthetic experience. A state of the free signifies a departure from the aesthetic as an experiential trap grounded in modernity where art is reduced to the either history of its formalism or experienced as sublime affect—both of which, ungrounded historically and socially, reside outside of or beyond common existence. For Chowdhury, then, Rancière’s aesthetics does not deal with art per se but, rather, in his introduction to the interview, aesthetics becomes a means to common experience and its expression in politics—by treating the specific experience of art as a pure experience of art. The focus, then, is on the subjective experience of pure art where, for art to have any kind of experiential quality that is political and transformative, it requires a subjective self-suppression of art as it has been constituted and reconstituted in its modernist foundations. Chowdhury approaches Rancière’s politics of aesthetics through the self-suppression art that, seeking a form of expression, looks to something outside of itself that is experiential in quality. This process, then, places aesthetic experience in the pathway of translation—a mediation between the aesthetic experience and the contemporary world—aesthetics experience gets translated into an aesthetico-politics. The process or procedure of translation disrupts is the separation of art and life that autonomous art was dependent upon, for so long, in the various contexts within modernity, and after, where the autonomy of art is expressed, interpreted, and experienced as either the intensification and perfection of form, as a Hegelian metaphysics of “the idea,” or, even, as avant-gardist disruptions of the formal aspects of art—a war of position against bourgeoisie tastes. For Chowdhury, the tactic of disruption is a tactic captured through Rancière’s “aestheticization of common existence”. This is the point where the political and its transformative potential finds an experiential, subjective, and transformative basis through aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience, as a domain of affect, disrupts the modernist foundations of art primarily by destabilising its structures of judgment which, in modernity, only articulate the appraisal of the object through concepts that place art and aesthetics outside the domain of common existence.



This issue marks the introduction of a new, original, and ambitious project: [The Cultural Studies Timeline](#). In the framework of a single year, contributions interrogate the ways that scholarship, social movements, cultural phenomena, political events have had a direct impact on cultural studies. In this issue, [Rob Gehl](#) provides an introduction and overview of the project that marks the ways the project will proceed and calls for additional contributions and responses from *Lateral* readers. In the initial contribution to the timeline, [Mariah Wellman](#) approaches the year 1983 through Stuart Hall’s interventions into the nascent transdisciplinary formations that will later constitute a field of cultural studies in Australia and the United States. She also explores significant individual contributions that same year by James Carey, Geert Hofstede, Justin Wren-Lewis, and Richard Johnson.

Finally, this issue extends the UBI forum, introduced in issue 7.2, with responses from [Tai Neilson](#), [John Carl Baker](#), [Richard Todd Stafford](#), and [Daniel Zamora and Anton Jäger](#). These authors work through each inaugural contribution to the forum—either through conceptual categories, theoretical frameworks and intellectual traditions, constraints and possibilities for concrete policy-based transformations, or methods of historical and societal embeddedness. This forum operates in the spirit of a critical appraisal and conjunctural analysis of the political projects that contour contemporary discourses

around UBI, in theory and practice. In conversation with the original essays, these contributions shape how we might do UBI both by insisting on its material foundations, and challenging how we might take it up.

Notes

1. Aimee Picchi, "A Decade After the Recession, 40% of U.S. Families Still Struggling," MoneyWatch, *CBS News*, May 13, 2019, accessed May 14, 2019, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-decade-after-the-recession-40-of-us-families-still-struggling/>. 
2. Cathy Davidson, "How a University Can Sell Its Soul: HASTAC's Stanford Origins and the University's Current Decision on Stanford University Press," *HASTAC*, April 28, 2019, accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.hastac.org/blogs/cathy-davidson/2019/04/28/how-university-can-sell-its-soul-hastacs-stanford-origins-and>. 
3. Scott Jaschik, "Reprieve at Stanford," *Inside Higher Ed*, May 1, 2019, accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/05/01/stanford-backs-down-year-ending-support-university-press>. 
4. Tumblr Staff, "A better, more positive Tumblr," December 3, 2018, <https://staff.tumblr.com/post/180758987165/a-better-more-positive-tumblr>; Aja Romano, "Tumblr is banning adult content. It's about so much more than porn," *Vox*, updated December 17, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/12/4/18124120/tumblr-porn-adult-content-ban-user-backlash>. For example, reflecting popular sentiment, Romano notes of the content ban that "marginalized communities that have built safe spaces may now be newly vulnerable." 
5. Such as the repeal of net neutrality. See, Keith Collins, "Net Neutrality Has Officially Been Repealed. Here's How That Could Affect You," *The New York Times*, June 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/11/technology/net-neutrality-repeal.html>. 
6. This sentiment is captured by Lizzie Dearden, "Neo-Nazi groups allowed to stay on facebook because they 'do not violate community standards,'" *The Independent*, March 24, 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/facebook-new-zealand-neo-nazis-white-supremacists-a8837886.html>. 
7. Reporters note "a dramatic increase of street-based sex workers" after the passing of FOSTA, reflected a more labor-intensive process for acquiring clients. Lux Alptraum, "The Internet Made Sex Work Safer. Now Congress Has Forced It Back Into the Shadows," *The Verge*, May 1, 2018, <https://www.theverge.com/2018/5/1/17306486/sex-work-online-fosta-backpage-communications-decency-act>. 
8. Such as increased subjection to pimps and other predatory figures, as argues April Glaser, "There Is No New Backpage," *Slate*, February 13, 2019, <https://slate.com/technology/2019/02/backpage-sex-workers-fosta-sesta-twitter-tryst-trafficking.html>. 
9. Alptraum, "The Internet Made Sex Work Safer." 
10. INCITE! "Policing Sex Work," INCITE! Network website, accessed on May 10, 2019, <https://incite-national.org/policing-sex-work/>; see also the "Policing Sex Work Toolkit," accessed on May 22, 2019, <https://incite-national.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/toolkitrev-sexwork.pdf>. 
11. Adam Harris, "The Death of an Adjunct," *The Atlantic*, April 8, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/adjunct-professors-higher-education-thea-hunter/586168/>. 

12. TIAA, "Taking the measure of faculty diversity," April 2016, https://www.tiaainstitute.org/sites/default/files/presentations/2017-02/taking_the_measure_of_faculty_diversity.pdf. 
13. Toby Miller, "What It Is and What It Isn't: Cultural Studies Meets Graduate-Student Labor," *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 13, no. 1, (2001), 69. <https://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1234&context=yjlh>. 

 [Bio](#)

Robert Carley

Robert F. Carley is Assistant Professor of International Studies at Texas A&M University, College Station. He serves on the editorial board of *Sociological Focus: Journal of the North Central Sociological Association*, is co-coordinator of The Union for Democratic Communications, and is a co-editor of *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association*. He is the author of *Culture and Tactics: Gramsci, Race, and The Politics of Practice* (SUNY Press 2019), *Autonomy, Refusal, and The Black Bloc* (Rowman and Littlefield International 2019), and *Collectivities: Politics at the Intersections of Disciplines* (2016). In 2017, he received The North Central Sociological Association's Scholarly Achievement Award for his article "Ideological Contention: Antonio Gramsci and the Connection between Race and Social Movement Mobilization in Early 20th Century Italy" (2016).

 [Bio](#)

Stefanie A Jones

SAJ is a McNair scholar, an organizer, and an educator, and received their doctorate from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. SAJ has published in edited collections and *Theatre Journal* and has taught at Brooklyn College, Hunter College, the College of Staten Island, Marymount Manhattan College, and New York University. SAJ's research explores war, white supremacy, twenty-first century capitalist economies, and the connections between class formation and political practice.

 [Bio](#)

 [Twitter](#)

Eero Laine

Eero Laine is an Assistant Professor at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York.

[Bio](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Chris Alen Sula](#)

Chris Alen Sula is Associate Professor and Coordinator of Digital Humanities and Data Analytics & Visualization at Pratt Institute's School of Information. He teaches graduate courses in digital humanities, information visualization, critical theory, and community building and engagement. His research applies visualization and network science to humanities datasets, especially those chronicling the history of philosophy. He has also published articles on citation studies in the humanities; the connection between digital humanities, libraries, and cultural heritage institutions; the politics of technology; and ethical and activist uses of visualization.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY) License, unless otherwise noted.
ISSN 2469-4053